

SORKIN

**TUBERCULOSIS IMMUNIZATION
RESEARCH CENTRE**

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ES/GS

October 25th 1960

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
Stanford University
Medical Center
Palo Alto
California
U.S.A.

Dear Josh,

I meant to write you and Professor Djerassi within the next few days on my decision, which, as you know, in turn depends on certain other decisions, partly here and partly in Switzerland. As so often, everything is so much slower than previewed, e.g. I have just heard from Switzerland that the faculty will not make a final decision before another 6 weeks, and so here I am still waiting. Since my tendencies go more and more towards taking the job you so generously offered and kept open for me, and since I could not come anyway before the end of 1961, I have only these certainly weak arguments in defence to ask you for a 6-7 weeks delay in my answer. Should you and Professor Djerassi feel otherwise then please inform me without any hesitation, and I will give you a firm answer earlier.

I like to mention also a few more points today and perhaps you are in a position to answer them. First the question of personnel. Will animal attendants be available (2) who possess sufficient knowledge of breeding and care of laboratory animals, with special reference also to the immunological type of work? Naturally, I realize we are in an extremely favourable place at the present and utterly spoilt with regard to the animal side of the work.

Then the question of collaborators. Will it be permissible to have two technical assistants and at least one or better two post doctoral workers? Although I do not believe in the efficiency of big units, I feel a certain minimum of experimentators, mutual criticism and stimulation will be of great value for the work.

Then there is the technical question of our removal and travel costs. Would Syntex be willing to pay our one way transportation both for the family and for the household goods? After making a rough calculation, this might well amount to about 3,000 Dollars, a fact which must unfortunately play a big role in our decisions. One last point is the question how many weeks holiday will Syntex give me?

25/10/60

And finally a few words about the work. After our many failures on cell free synthesis of antibody, we have "recovered" recently so far to start again. No much progress yet, sure somebody must succeed, if only to proof or disproof that antigenic groups, after interaction with one (or more) repressor(s) with subsequent changes in the protein synthesising apparatus, are no longer necessary for actual synthesis of antibody. Our experiments on the repressor idea are of only little interest, I fear. We had hoped to show that Ab-synthesis by spleens of boosted rabbits in vitro could be repressed by extracts from normal subcellular units (free repressor(s)), but not by such from boosted hyperimmune rabbits (bound repressor(s)). In fact, extracts from nuclei and cell debris of both normal and immune animals were strongly inhibitory, much less so mitochondrial and microsomal extracts and cell sap. But what is more disappointing, the extracts from non antibody forming tissue like heart, were about equally inhibitory. So we have probably only demonstrated a general toxic effect on the antibody forming cells. I could discuss all this with you to get some brilliant suggestions. Maybe I waste my time with these experiments?

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Ernst Sorkin

P.S. The new data for the Ab-workshop meeting suits me better and I await now further news.

c.c.: Professor Djerassi